

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 have been canceled. Claims 3, 6, and 9 are in this application.

The Examiner indicated that claims 3, 6, and 9 are allowed.

Claims 1, 4, and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Kataoka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,476,794). Claims 2, 5, and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka et al. in view of Sudo (U.S. Patent No. 5,856,827).

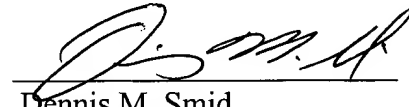
As previously mentioned, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 have been canceled. Such cancellation is not a representation concerning distinctions and/or similarities between the present invention and the applied references. Applicants reserve their right to file one or more continuation applications to continue the prosecution of the canceled claims.

This is in response to the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance included in the present Office Action mailed January 30, 2004. To the extent the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance states, implies or is construed to mean that the claims are allowable over the prior art of record because the Examiner believes the claims should be interpreted to include one or more features or limitations not recited therein, Applicants' attorney disagrees with such an interpretation. Moreover, it is Applicants' contention that there is no particular limitation in the allowed claims that is more critical than any other. The issuance of Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance should not be construed as a surrender by Applicants of any subject matter. It is the intent of Applicants, by their attorney, to construe the allowed claims so as to cover the invention disclosed in the instant application and all equivalents to which the claimed invention is entitled.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid herewith
to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. M. Smid", is written over a horizontal line.

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